

B.O.A.C. Plans and Reorganization

Mr. Whitney Straight Gives Details of Departments and Aircraft

FOLLOWING the important simultaneous announcement in the Lords and Commons concerning the purchase of aircraft from Canada, Mr. Whitney Straight, chief B.O.A.C. executive, last week announced details of the internal reorganization of the Corporation and utilization of its fleet. He had previously made a statement to all levels of B.O.A.C. staff about the new set-up and fleet. A similar survey of B.O.A.C. plans was given at a press conference. The salient points made may be summarized as follows:

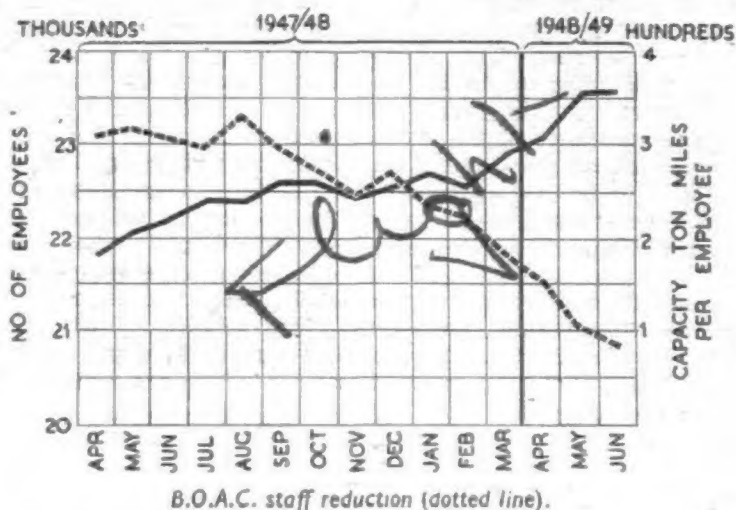
An all-out competitive drive is to be made for traffic, particularly dollar traffic on Atlantic and Empire routes; decentralization is to be the new policy underlying the Corporation's organization. Further small reductions in staff are to be made, but of greater importance is their more efficient employment; close co-operation is being and will be maintained between the three Corporations to avoid overlap, and in order to pool experience. Regarding aircraft, the operation of a fleet of Tudor IVB pressurized freighters and a more adventurous specification for the Bristol 175 were items of particular importance.

The internal organization of the Corporation has been carefully examined with two objectives in mind; first, how the greatest overall economy can be effected, and secondly, "how the method and system can be so improved that chain of control and scope of individual responsibilities are made clear beyond doubt." Mr. Whitney Straight has also made a study of the organization of the majority of the world's principal airlines. The conclusion reached was that the most effective system for the Corporation would be based on a general principle of maximum possible delegation of authority, in other words, "decentralization right down the line."

The new divisional system devised is shown in diagrammatic form. Under it the head office is considerably reduced in size, and full authority is vested in a management committee composed of the heads of divisions. The full headquarters team comprises chief executive, advisory chiefs and heads of divisions. Sir Victor Tait is promoted to deputy chief executive under Mr. Whitney Straight. His work as Director-General of Signals in the Air Ministry, prior to joining B.O.A.C. in 1945, will be remembered.

The new Western Division, under Mr. Vernon Crudge, has a sphere of influence extending from London westward to Australia, and the Eastern Division, under Mr. J. Brancker, extends eastward from London to Australasia and Japan. The Western Division will concentrate particularly on obtaining the maximum possible traffic from the American continent. The Lines and Areas under the divisions will be responsible respectively for types of aircraft and geographical location, each Line will be responsible for one type of aircraft, Hermes, Tudor or Canadair, and it is hoped that a wartime squadron spirit will be fostered in these comparatively small units. The job of the Areas' staff will be, for example, to sell all available seats and space passing through their section or allocated to them. Mr. Whitney Straight suggested a conveyor belt simile: Lines keeping the belt running flat out and Areas keeping it filled with produce.

All U.K. sales, traffic and catering will be the responsibility of the U.K. Region



—the housekeeping organization—under Mr. Keith Granville, and Central Supply and General Servicing will come under the Personnel and Services administrative department headed by Mr. G. T. Meller. The Personnel subdivision is regarded as of particular importance, and its head, Mr. Blair-Cunynghame, will be a member of the Management Committee. Sir William Cushion will look after General Services.

Of the two technical departments, one for development and the other the repair division, it may be said that Mr. Campbell Orde's team are in the nature of backroom boys, while the repair division, under Mr. Robson, has undergone very important reorganization to become commercially independent. This means that the section stands or falls on results obtained, and is free to take on outside commitments as it thinks fit. By the same token, B.O.A.C. servicing can be sub-contracted to other repair companies which are able to offer services of the requisite high standard at competitive costs.

Commercial Development, under Mr. R. D. Stewart, like Technical Development, is an advisory, non-executive section.

Responsible directly to the chief executive are the solicitor, secretary, internal auditor, director of medical services (Sir Harold Whittingham, previously Director-General of Medical Service in the R.A.F.) and chief P.R.O. (G/C. F. W. Winterbotham).

Mr. Whitney Straight was unable to give a target figure for numbers in the new stabilized staff set-up, nor was a date given for its achievement. The accompanying curves indicate a drop in the number of employees during the last 14 months of approximately 2,300, and since their preparation it is understood that the figure has fallen to just below the 20,000 mark. It is important to remember that in this figure are included large numbers of native staff employed at airfields on the Empire routes.

The Air Fleet

Referring to the present aircraft fleet, the old stop-gap types and the Tudors, Mr. Whitney Straight said that he did not intend to dig up the past. One chapter was now closed and another had been opened. B.O.A.C. had been handicapped in being unable to make plans

